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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

GREAT TEACHERS.

A HIGHLY valuable series, under the editorial supervision of Nicholas Murray Butler, of New York, entitled, "The Great Educators," is now in progress. It includes such celebrated names as Aristotle, Abelard, Froebel, Herbart, Loyola and Pestalozzi, and, as especially interesting to English readers, Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, and Horace Mann, of America. These volumes deal not only with the lives and writings and intellectual influence of the respective men discussed, but with the great educational movements of which they were the exponents, and with the pressing problems in the science and art of teaching growing out of their various labors. Thus, in the treatise on Aristotle we have the whole subject of the old classical system; in Alcuin, that of the origin of the Christian schools; in Abelard, the University methods; in Pestalozzi, the interesting theme of the training of children; in Arnold, the great English secondary system; and in Horace Mann, that of public education in this country. The series suggests a question of special educational interest: What constitutes a Great Teacher?

To our mind there are four factors or elements essential to the personality of an educator of eminence. First: He must be a scholar, especially in the particular department in which he is working. As a Professor, he must actually know what he professes to know, knowing it thoroughly, or, as the Old English expresses it, thoroughly, through and through, in itself as a specific subject or section of truth, and in all its manifold relations to the general department of truth and fact. In the organization of our Secondary Schools, teachers are significantly called, Masters, both in the disciplinary and educational sense. Educators must be masters of their departments, masters of their mental selves, and thus able to command the respect of those looking to them for knowledge, and needing it. First and last, they must be well-informed men, thoroughly booked, or "thoroughly furnished" with knowledge as their stock in trade. The teacher is, first, a storehouse, a base of supplies, a source of enlightenment to the student as a Learner. In Old English, the teacher is a *Lareow*, a man of lore, an authority to his pupils, who as disciples or learners sit at his feet and wait upon his word.

Further, the teacher must be an *Expositor* or *Interpreter* of Truth. The etymological force of our word "teach," is here in place, the Old English verb, *taecan*, meaning to exhibit, to set forth, to show. It is one of the prime offices of the teacher to set forth the truth in clear light so that all may see it, and, seeing it, may apprehend it. It is his office to hold up

the truth before the observer's mind, to make it, as our oldest writers would have said, understandable. Hence, his function is that of an Expositor, an Interpreter, an Explainer, having it as his duty to make the truth plain, to bring it down to the level of the recipient's mind, so that it may have its full effect as truth.

This is something more than mere knowledge. It is the ability to impart and diffuse knowledge. Mere knowledge may exist without it. It involves the art of communication, or dispensation of truth. The teacher must be "apt to teach," "able to teach others also," anything but a "novice" in his work, having by nature or study the facility of expression or elucidation. How much this includes will be seen on reflection—a large and exact vocabulary; clear views of truth; a lucid and logical method; in fact, all that is included in the important work of the presentation of knowledge to the mind. When, moreover, the teacher rises as an expositor to the highest planes of his office, into the region of great general principles that need unfolding and application, it is at once evident that his function has to do with all that is fundamental and vital. Knowledge and fact in their concrete forms now give place to the great laws and principles that underlie them, and the teacher becomes a real Illuminator, setting forth the deepest truths to the inspection of men for their acceptance and profit.

Again, the teacher must be a Mental Trainer. Here we rise, in educational work, to a still higher level. This is the sphere of education proper, as a mental exercise and profession. Our word "train" (from *trainèr*, *traho*) means precisely what our word education (*educare*) means, the evolving of inner power, the drawing forth of native faculty and function.

This is the specifically disciplinary side of the teacher's work, wherein as an intellectual guide and helper he seeks to bring out into open and fullest expression the best that is in his pupils—their latent powers and aptitudes, their abilities and capabilities, so as to reveal them to themselves. Education is essentially a training, the very word discipline (*discere*) radically involving the idea of teaching. As such, teaching includes two somewhat distinct and yet closely related processes, which we may best express by the etymological use of the words, Instruction and Education—building in [*in-struo*] and drawing out [*educo*], working all acquired knowledge into the very mental substance of the pupil, so as to make it an actual element of himself, and also evolving that which is inherent in him, and giving it objective form and process. Instruction is thus mental construction, the real edification or building up of the pupil in all that makes his intellectual power; while Education is the unfolding and manifest expression of inward ability. Each process, however, is alike disciplinary, and contributive to the highest intellectual results, without which, indeed, no such thing as teaching, in its truest sense can exist. At no point is the difference more marked between the mere pedagogue and the real educator, as a mental disciplinarian.

As a fourth and final essential, we note that the Teacher is an Intellectual Quickener, an Inspirer of minds and men, more impressive in his mental and general personality than any knowledge that he communicates or any discipline which he secures. Indeed it is here that we reach the summation of the teacher's work, the highest element of his power, wherein he appears as a vital force, a potent factor in all that affects the well-being of his pupils. He himself and his teaching are thus alike quickening, incitive and energizing, sending the student to the library and the laboratory to follow out the lines laid down for him, and to utilize all that he has

received by independent investigation. Herein we see the element of enthusiasm in educational work, by which its somewhat necessarily formal methods are animated and relieved, and its most didactic processes invested with genuine interest. It is by such an inspiring method as this that notable teachers reproduce themselves in their students, and herein it is seen that the true teacher is immeasurably greater than the books that he consults or produces.

Such, as we conceive them, are the four fundamental marks of a Great Teacher.

Such teachers are, indeed, rare. They are as rare as great epic writers are in verse, or great historians in prose, here and there appearing by conspicuous contrast among the numerous names of lesser note, and serving to give educational renown to any age or period which they respectively represent. Limiting our survey to America, such educators were Mark Hopkins, and Francis Wayland, and Theodore Woolsey. Such, in theology, were Park and Shedd, and the Alexanders. Such, in science, were Guyot, Agassiz and Henry; Theodore Dwight, in the department of law; McCosh, in philosophy; Hadley, and Taylor, and Whitney, in language; and Child, in literature.

These men, without exception, were Scholars and Interpreters and Trainers and Inspirers—great teachers in their respective departments, immense educational forces in the land, and giving to American institutions an order of historic repute which any nation might covet. Is this apostolic succession in any sense maintained among us? We have scholars and interpreters. Have we also teachers, in any considerable number, who know what is meant by intellectual training and quickening as their highest privilege and function? Have we great educators in such a ratio as the old régime produced? Is there not danger in the radical changes now making in educational methods, and in the unduly hasty assumption of university functions on the part of our colleges, that education may become less and less mentally broadening and inspiring, a matter merely of knowledge and the skilful manipulation of it? While our processes and methods are expanding, are they also deepening? With university extension, have we university intension, more and more of the philosophic and less and less of the pedagogic? Is it not possible that the disciplinary element in our higher education is diminishing rather than increasing. Students are taught to listen and observe and read and experiment. Are they taught to think, and are our teachers, first of all, thinkers? With all the decided advantages connected with the widening of the curriculum in our colleges, it is possible that the early opening of the elective system to somewhat immature minds, so often incapable of the wisest choice, the increasing prevalence of the lecture system to the gradual displacement of the text-book, and the increasing distance between professors and students by reason of the rapidly growing numbers in our larger institutions, may tend directly to superficiality, and make it all the more difficult to develop great teachers or great students.

The claims of the smaller colleges, at this point, as to the value of their less ambitious courses, and their more direct intimate relationship between teacher and student are not to be ignored. It is, indeed, under such so called limited conditions that most of America's notable teachers have been produced. The greatest need of Higher Education at the present moment is great educators.

TH. W. HUNT.